

July 12, 2017

The Honorable Todd Portune  
138 East Court Street, Room 603  
Cincinnati, OH 45202



Jill P. Meyer  
President & CEO

Dear Commission Board President Portune,

On behalf of the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, the region's largest business advocacy organization, I write to share the Chamber's endorsements of the Hamilton County Tax Levy Review Committee (TLRC) recommendations for the 2017 Indigent Care, Mental Health, and Senior Services tax levy renewals. The Chamber encourages you to place the levy renewals on the ballot at the levels recommended by the TLRC. Upon review of the individual levy reports, the Chamber believes the recommendations make vetted, sound investments in agencies and organizations that help to improve and grow the prosperity and health of the county and its residents, while best prioritizing fiscal prudence for tax-paying businesses and citizens.

The **Indigent Care Levy** is critical to the health of the County's indigent population and combats a myriad of challenges, such as the opiate epidemic and ensuring people who cannot afford it have access to medical care. Covering this vulnerable population can help to grow the economic prosperity of the region. As the TLRC noted, renewal of the levy at the current millage would result in a shortfall. Given the increasing needs and services supported by the levy, the Chamber agrees that adjusting the levy to the inflation-adjusted millage is appropriate. The indigent care levy currently supports programs that are legally-mandated to be funded regardless of whether a levy should pass. Given the County's financial challenges, these levies and supported programs cannot be put at risk at the expense of Hamilton County's General Revenue Fund. The Chamber agrees with the TLRC that moving the mandated services from this levy to the County's general revenue fund is in the best interest of Hamilton County taxpayers.

Concerning the **Senior Services Levy**, the Chamber recognizes Hamilton County mirrors the state with the number of senior citizens increasing annually, and agrees with the TLRC that a strategic long-term plan is needed for the levy for it to best support and expand the population it serves. A 3-year term for this levy, similar to the previous two cycles of the indigent care levy, will allow for appropriate planning and a re-evaluation of the levy for the voter's consideration.

Finally, regarding the **Mental Health Levy**, the Chamber agrees with the TLRC that a flat renewal is appropriate. This levy funds critical services in Hamilton County and renewal of this levy and surplus balance will ensure these services remain in place for the vulnerable population it serves.

The TLRC has provided both near-term recommendations and longer-term guidance as the County will need to solve fiscal challenges facing the levies. The Chamber appreciates the transparent process undertaken by the TLRC and the attention given in visiting and vetting individual agencies and organizations supported by the levies. Hamilton County businesses and residents will be better off due to the diverse viewpoints of the TLRC and the diligent work of the Committee members. The Chamber urges you to support the recommendations from the TLRC for the Indigent Care Levy, the Mental Health levy, and the Senior Services levy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Meyer".

Jill P. Meyer

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